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ABSTRACT

The first section of this paper on the school library and the learner discusses policies and the school library. Recommendations are offered related to hours, creating an inviting atmosphere, convenience, collection, computer services, reading material selection, storytelling, and reading aloud. The second section addresses principles of learning and the school librarian. The following principles are discussed: (1) pupils need to pay attention to the ongoing learning activity; (2) pupils need to attach meaning to the ongoing experience; (3) there needs to be purpose for and in learning; (4) success in learning is important; and (5) individual differences need to receive adequate provision. Questions for the school librarian to ask him/herself are listed. (MES)

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The School Library and the Learner

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THE SCHOOL LIBRARY AND THE LEARNER

The school library must be a focal point for learning. With books and other materials on a variety of topics/genres and reading levels, it can truly be a place for enjoyment and study. The school library needs to have a philosophy of openness. There are invitations for readers to come and read. The librarian and staff are friendly and helpful in securing books for pupils. Posters on the wall show illustrations of prominent people who are engaged in reading and welcome others to do the same. The atmosphere is one in which individuals can concentrate well on ideas read. Conference rooms need to be available for students who will be working on committee projects and cooperative learning endeavors. A good school library is one in which there is enthusiasm for reading and learning (The Language Arts).

Policies and the School Library

A school library must meet needs of readers. The posted schedule must show it is open at suitable hours for school pupils. The library does not exist for the sake of doing so, nor to "show" patrons in the district that there is one. The school library and its facilities must be utilitarian and convenient to use. A welcoming atmosphere needs to be in the offing. The school library needs to be open then during vacation time and on Saturdays during the regular school year. The point is that pupils need to have ample opportunities to read. They also need time to browse. Browsing is one way of stimulating interest in the library world. Exciting and fascinating bulletin board displays help to entice pupils to read. A bulletin board display may be made of book jackets from new library books. Underneath each book jacket are major words which tell about a book. Caring and sharing librarians and their helpers do make for an inviting atmosphere (The Hornbook Magazine).

During the Fall quarter of the 1950 - 51 school year at Bethel College (North Newton, Kansas), the author took a course in Children's Literature. The college had no children's literature department at that time and was dependent upon the Newton Public LIbrary for college students to check out materials for course work. Each college student in the Children's Literature class was to make a file on 5 x 8 inch cards of twenty books, one summarized book per card, which later were to be used in regular teaching. One thing which made this a very memorable class was that the children's librarian was highly familiar with and told college students about each library book, when requesting

assistance. There were fifteen students in the children's Literature class. The librarian was not only very efficient in telling about each book to students requesting assistance when making a library book selection for summarization, but also possessed efficacy in doing so. The children's library was housed in a beautiful Carnegie building which still maintains its poise and beauty today. Children's literature librarians need to be polite, caring, and helpful to those needing assistance, be it a child or an adult.

Convenience in using the library is important. With economizing in providing library services, schools have moved and then moved again the location of their libraries. Many libraries have been converted to classrooms. A plethora of classrooms in which the author supervised university student teachers had the faded name "library" on the door. Libraries are an early casualty of budget cutting. The place then which became the library was reached by going through a maze of hallways surrounded by a musty odor. States need to have definite standards which school districts need to follow in developing and maintaining a library. The size and quality of each library need to be clearly documented. An adequate number of library books need to be in the offing and also added, each year, to the present collection. An up- to- date collection of library books need to be in the offing, such as adding each school year the Newbery and Caldecott award winning library books (See Arbuthnot, et. al).

Quality computer services need to be inherent in each library. The library holdings need to be very conducive to having pupils doing research. The internet can be good provider of information in doing research. One pupil was amazed when researching information, using the internet, on the Palestinian Arab/ Israeli conflict that securing water in the land of Palestine was a major source of contention. Pupils within an ongoing unit of study may identify a relevant problem, gather information, develop an hypothesis, and then test the hypothesis. Problem solving should be a leading learning activity in the library/classroom connection.

For independent reading, pupils may need assistance in selecting an appropriate library book. A school librarian being well versed in titles, contents, and reading levels of library books can do much to interest the learner in reading. Interest can be developed within a learner when the latter listens to the contents of the book told orally by a librarian. A librarian who knows children's literature and is very familiar with individual library books needs to be able to convey this information to a

prospective reader. The prospective reader might then choose to read the library book recommended by a librarian. Ample attention needs to be given to quality library books on ethnic minorities (See Council on Interracial Books for Children).

The school librarian needs to do well in using puppets to tell stories to groups of young children. Children do become excited when puppets and marionettes are used in story telling. The speaking voice needs to possess clarity and convey information with voice inflection which fits the role in a story. A well modulated voice using proper stress, pitch, and juncture can do much to secure learner attention when using puppets and marionettes. Pupils, too, may enjoy story telling without puppets and marionettes. The latter may not be available for use in telling selected stories. If a pleasant voice with appropriate voice inflection is used by the librarian/teacher in story telling, this will go a long way in attracting pupil interest in the contents.

There are teachers who have developed pupils' abilities to tell interesting content of a library book read. The formation of small committees may assist pupils to do well in developing interest for reading within others and offer suggestions to other learners on reading materials to select and check out. With Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), a pupil needs to have a library book to read quietly to the self, at a designated time in the classroom. The school librarian needs to assist these pupils to locate a book of interest. This is a good role for the librarian to play in helping pupils achieve in reading (Tledt, 1983).

If the school has an individualized reading program, alongside or in place of the basal reader, the librarian can truly be effective in helping pupils increase in the number of books read meaningfully. Each book chosen by the pupil with librarian assistance then must capture learner attention. The pupil and the library book need to become one, not separate entities in which the learner sees no value in reading its comes. Librarians need to come to know each pupil as an individual, not as a mass group. Pupils individually have topics of personal interest to read; they have unique reading levels; and they have novel ways or styles of learning. A school librarian then has tremendous responsibilities in assisting, guiding, and helping pupils to select library books for reading.

The school librarian should read aloud to pupils during story time. This can be done in the regular classroom or in the library. The librarian here is a model for children to emulate in reading narrative, creative, or expository content. Each of these three kinds of literature should be read aloud to pupils by the regular teacher and the school librarian. The person doing the

reading aloud faces children and has good eye contact. He/she indicates that reading is exciting, good, and engaging. The voice model should be one which is pleasing to pupils. The read aloud helps pupils secure background information as well as provide a good model for reading (Ediger and Rao, 2000, Chapter Eleven).

Principles of Learning and the School Librarian

Educational Psychology has selected principles of learning to emphasize which assists the learning process. These principles, if followed, assist pupils to achieve as optimally as possible. First, pupils need to establish set in attending to what is being presented such as a story read or told. If pupils do not pay attention to the ongoing learning activity, the chances are achievement will be rather limited. Careful attention to each learner with eye contact can do much to have pupil attend to what is being emphasized. The use of a stimulating voice also may well assist pupils to enjoy and desire to have an increased number of reading, speaking, writing, and listening activities.

Second, pupils need to attach meaning to the ongoing experience. If, for example, a library book read aloud does not make sense to listeners, the contents will not become a part of the background information of pupils. Meaning theory is salient to emphasize. Pupils might achieve well on a day to day basis if the activities are understood.

Third, there needs to be purpose for and in learning. A pupil using a variety of information resources from the library to solve a problem in an ongoing unit of study must perceive a reason for doing so. Without that reason or purpose, the energy level for learning will be low indeed. With purpose, there is a desire to achieve and complete the task.

Fourth, success in learning is important. Feeling successful spurs a pupil on to further tasks and activities. Positive feelings result from being successful. The self concept tends to improve with experiencing success. A person merely has to think of the time he/she experienced failure and the feeling which followed. It is much better to experience success which improves attitudes and the wanting to learn.

Fifth, individual differences need to receive adequate provision. Thus, each pupil has priorities in what is liked in terms of topics for reading. There may be some overlapping, but the individual needs are there. Reading levels differ from child to child. All these differences need to be provided for in the

classroom (Ediger and Rao, 2003, Chapter Five).

The school librarian needs to study children and make decisions on helping each learn as much as possible. Careful observations made with journal entries kept on these observations will guide the librarian in making better choices than would other wise be the case.

Time needs to be taken by the librarian to teach pupils the uses which may be made of the library. Sequential learnings then need to be made in how to use the school library. Some of these may take a considerable amount of time such as using the card catalog with the author, subject, title, or cross reference card. The older card catalog or the newer computerized approach in locating books to read should be taught in groups of learners and also as needed to the individual. Objectives need to be arranged from the easier to those gradually more difficult for pupils to achieve in using the card catalog. Practical experiences for pupils need to be emphasized to achieve these objectives. Pupils will be at different levels of achievement. The amount of assistance needed will vary from pupil to pupil to be successful in goal attainment.

The extent of the library holdings will determine which introductory learnings to provide pupils. The following are important for pupil learning and their use: newspapers, magazines, different genres of books, video tapes, CD ROMS, DVDs, cassettes, picture files, paintings, among others. The school librarian needs to evaluate how pupils are using library materials, how they are improving in using these materials, and which skills need to be taught to learners. The following are questions which the school librarian needs to ask himself/herself:

1. what might I do to have a planned set of quality library experiences for pupils?
2. how does the library reflect a well planned, organized literary curriculum?
3. how do library services emphasize an integrated school curriculum?
4. what is done to make library use an enjoyable experience?
5. how does the library and its services relate to the classroom setting?
6. what is done by the library to provide time for individualized reading?
7. how is assistance given to help pupils enjoy reading activities?
8. how is reading aloud to pupils correlated with the

objectives of literary instruction?

9. what is done to assist pupils to become consumers of literature?

10. how is enthusiasm for my work as a librarian reflected within children? (Ediger and Rao, 2003, Chapter Seven)

The school librarian when introducing children to quality literature needs to refer to structural elements of content. These elements may consist of telling about

1. the setting of the story.
2. characterization pertaining to the main or several leading persons in the story.
3. the plot of the story.
4. irony.
5. theme of the story (See Applebee, 1980).

Conclusion

The school library is a central part of the curriculum. The holdings in the library may be used by pupils for library book selection, for gathering information to solve problems, and for doing research. The librarian needs to possess qualities of being proficient in working with children, have knowledge of library books, assist learners to find needed materials, be able to read aloud well, and do story telling, among other duties of a model librarian. The librarian uses principles of learning from educational psychology to obtain learner interests and attention as well as increase retention of content learned.

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